

WELCOME TO FARMINGDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE

November 30, 2025



Rev. Claire Hojung Wu, Pastor
David Majoros, D.M.A., Director of Music
Betty Gastelua, Narrator I
Lois Muller, Narrator II

GATHERING “Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne” - Matthew

***PRELUDE** “People, Look East” UMH #202 (VV 1, 3, 4)
+ Bringing the light of Christ into the sanctuary

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Pastor Claire Wu

SHARING GOD’S BLESSINGS WITH EACH OTHER

OPENING PRAYER Robert Carle
You have wakened us from sleep and led us to this place, wondrous God. Now let us feel your presence with us as we encounter your Word. Surely, you have blessed us. You have drawn us together and bound us firmly to one another. We give you thanks for giving us an identity as relatives and friends through Jesus Christ. In this season, we remember your unexpected appearance among us in the birth of a child. You make yourself known to us again and again. May we know you now! Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Narrator I: Good morning and welcome! God’s Blessings to you. Over 2,000 years ago, as the story goes, a clutch of sleepy shepherds was watching over their sheep on a star-brightened hillside in Palestine. It was a still, uneventful night. Suddenly the darkness was filled with a strange light. The stillness was broken by angel voices singing “Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good will to all.” So begins Christmas, the most beautiful and meaningful celebration of the Christian calendar.

Narrator II: Christmas actually begins with Advent, the season through which we are moving. Both the seasons of Advent—the season of “going toward” the birth of Christ—and Christmas have a long history. These seasons and their customs have developed through many centuries and many countries. Old customs and observances are refined, renewed, replaced; new ones are added. Some of our customs have pagan origins but have been redeemed or converted by redefining their meanings. What is significant for us is not what they may have once meant, but rather what they mean to us today.

Narrator I: Please join me for the Litany of the Greens:

L: How can we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

P: With the branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.

L: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?

P: With garlands of wreaths, of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

L: How shall we prepare this house for the coming Jesus, our Savior?

P: With arrangements of holly and ivy, symbolizing His passion, death and resurrection.

L: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?

P: By hearing again the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God.

L: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

All: All Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

Narrator II: This morning, our sanctuary will begin to wear its Christmas apparel. Our Christmas tree stands in the sanctuary. The lights will shine for us. As we make ready for the commemoration of the birth of the child by preparing this sanctuary, we make ready ourselves and the sanctuary of our own hearts. We are mindful that, although it is not Christmas yet, it will be here soon, very soon.

Narrator I: As we decorate the church, not only will we explain the history of the symbols of these special seasons, but we will rededicate these symbols—and ourselves—to the service of God.

***Let us stand and sing “Angels from the Realms of Glory” UMH 220 (vv. 1, 2, 4)**

All: God of manger and star, let us enter your story once again and find ourselves kneeling with the shepherds, singing with the angels and worshipping the Magi. Touch our hearts with the wonder of birth, and the depths of your love. Speak to us in word and song and lift us to the realms of glory. Amen.

**Scripture: Isaiah 9:6-7
being read by Shanna Wurth**

WREATH

Narrator II: Let us start our decorating! With the hanging of the wreaths!

From ancient times, evergreens have been considered a symbol of eternity, a sign of God’s everlasting nature. Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we hang wreaths shaped in circles, as a sign of everlasting life. These are symbols of Christ’s gift of eternal life and of the celebration of Christmas itself.

**As the wreath is being hung by Elizabeth and Nathaniel Orofino,
let us sing “Go Tell it on the Mountain” UMH 251 (vv. 1, 2, 3)**

POINSETTIA

Narrator I: The poinsettia speaks to us symbolically in several ways. The star-shaped formation of ten leaves calls to mind the star that shone that first Christmas. In a less joyous sense, the color of the flower is blood red, reminding us of the male infants killed because King Herod wanted to eliminate any threat to his throne. We sometimes forget this part of the story, which made it necessary for Mary, Joseph and the Christ Child to flee to Egypt.

**As the poinsettias are being brought to the altar by Lily and Finey Hopper,
let us sing “Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming” UMH 216 (vv. 1, 2)**

Narrator II: Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors in many ways by the prophets, but in these days, he has spoken to us by a Son.

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

Narrator I: In the sanctuary, candles stand; their light a reminder of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. As His light shines in the darkness, it brings up into the light those who follow his way. So, the light is spread outward as each Christian brings his light into the world.

Narrator II: Today, we light the first candle as a symbol of Christ, our HOPE. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation.

**As the first Advent candle is being lit by The Sunde Family,
let us sing "Light the Advent Candle" FWS # 2090 (v. 1)**

Narrator I: "Let your light so shine before all people, that they may see your good works and give glory to your God who is in heaven!"

CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATIONS AND TREE LIGHTS

Narrator II: Today the Christmas tree is the center of our festivities. Topped with a star, and glittering with lights and ornaments, it is part of the beauty and meaning of the Christmas season. How did the Christmas tree come to play such an important part in the observance of Christmas?

Narrator I: There is a legend that comes down to us from the early days of Christianity in England. One of those helping to spread Christianity among the Druids was a monk named Wilfred (later Saint Wilfred). One day, surrounded by a group of his converts, he struck down a huge oak tree, which, in the Druid religion, was an object of worship. As it fell to the earth, the oak tree split into four pieces and from its center sprung up a young fir tree. The crowd gazed in amazement.

Narrator II: Wilfred let his axe drop and turned to speak. "This little tree shall be your Holy Tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of the fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are evergreen. See how it points toward the heavens? "Let it be called the tree of the Christ Child. Gather about it, not in the wilderness, but in your homes. There it will be surrounded with loving gifts and rites of kindness." And to this day, that is why the fir tree is one of our loveliest symbols of Christmas.

Narrator I: With some families, decorating the Christmas Tree is a family tradition. They play Christmas carols, make hot chocolate, and bring out the holiday cookies, usually while someone struggles to put the lights on the tree. Then everyone joins in placing the ornaments on the tree. Each ornament they put on the tree holds special memories and some special stories. They bring to mind when Ms. Jenn and her students made the ornament in Sunday School, or when they found the lost pine cone. Let us now bring our ornaments to decorate our Church Christmas Tree, creating memories for the coming years.

**As the tree lights are lit and the tree is decorated by All Children and Sunday school Teachers,
let us sing a Carol, "O Christmas Tree."**

Carol: "O Christmas Tree"

**O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, O tree of green, unchanging.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, O tree of green, unchanging
Your boughs, so green in summertime, do brave the snow of wintertime.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, O tree of green, unchanging.**

**O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, You speak of God, unchanging.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, You speak of God, unchanging.
You tell us all to faithful be, and trust in God, eternally.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, You speak of God, unchanging.**

THE STORY OF BIRTH

Narrator II: Now with the beauty of the greens to remind us of the glory that came to earth at Christmas, let us hear again the story of the birth of Jesus – He who is called the light of the World.

Gospel of Luke 2:4-7
being read by Madison Milhous

**As the Nativity is being placed on the altar by Savannah Stroud,
let us sing “What Child Is This” UMH #219 (vv. 1)**

ANGELS

Narrator I: Kimberly Smith will read Gospel of Luke 2:8-16.

Gospel of Luke 2:8-16
being read by Kimberly Smith

**As the Angels - the Zandbaf family - enter the sanctuary,
let us sing “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” UMH # 240 (vv. 1, 2)**

GIFTS

Narrator II: Now let us hear the story of the First Christmas Gifts.

Gospel of Matthew 2:1-11
being read by Tom Sattler

**As the First Christmas Gifts are being placed by Ashley Stroud,
let us sing “We Three Kings of Orient Are” UMH # 254 (vv. 1, 5)**

OFFERTORY

Narrator I: In all the legends of the Christmas story, the shepherds offer gifts. In an Old English play, one of the shepherds places his fur cap over the manger to protect the baby’s head; another places his gloves across the feet. So, today, we too, through our offerings, bring gifts to the Babe of Bethlehem.

OFFERTORY SONG

“The First Noel”
Congregational Hymn

UMH 245 (vv. 1, 4, 5)

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH #95

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (UNISON) Thank you, God, for the privilege of sharing your bounty with those in need. Thank you for prospering our work and witness. We seek to walk in your light, and follow the pathways where you lead. We want to share the good news of salvation through these gifts, and by the way we live. May all your people be made ready for Christ’s coming. Amen.

Narrator II: Now let us stand and raise our voices to sing the final hymn, “Joy to the World” UMH 246 (vv. 1, 2, 3)

***BENEDICTION**

Let us live honorably as in the day.

May we have nothing to hide from God or others.

We seek to live in the light of God's love

We want to be ready when Christ comes.

We have been privileged to ascend God's mountains.

We are honored by God's call to us.

It has been good to meet together in God's house.

It is good to serve together in God's world.

May we carry the peace of God wherever we go.

Let us share that peace with all whom we meet.

For the sake of all, we say, "Peace be with you."

To all the world, we promise, "We will seek your good."

Amen. *Amen.*

***POSTLUDE**

"Joy to the World"

UMH 246 (v. 4)

Our worship has ended. Our service begins.

(*) Please stand as you are able.

OUR THANKS GO TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR MINISTRY:

UPCOMING LITURGISTS:

November

30th Betty Gastelua & Lois Muller

December

7th Karen G N

14th Diane

21st Danny

24th Early ~ Karen G N

Late ~ Lois

28th Sharon

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS:

November

30th UWF

December

7th Vicki & Annemarie

14th Lois & Kimberly S.

21st Kathy V & Amanda

WELCOME, VISITORS!

We are delighted that you have chosen to worship with us today! If this is your first time with us, be sure to stop by the Visitor Center, in the room to the side of the Sanctuary, for a welcome packet and a gift! If you wish to receive our newsletter, please send us your contact information to office@farmingdaleumc.org and visit our website farmingdaleumc.org.



2026 COMMITMENT PLEDGE CARDS – Thank you for faithfully submitting your 2026 commitment pledges. Your commitment helps strengthen our mission and ministry to God and others. If you have not already submitted your pledge card, they will gladly be accepted until December 14th.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Trustee Meeting** – Wednesday, December 3 at 7 p.m.
- **Finance Committee** – Tuesday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m.
- **Cooking Ministry** – Wednesday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m.
- **Church Council** – Monday, December 22 at 7:00pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **UMW CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6th AT 12:30 P.M.** – Join us at Tres Scalini. Advanced payment of \$44 per person (includes tax & tip) is required. We will again have a gift exchange with spending limit of \$5 (be creative) and collect 2026 Pledges and vote on Slate and Budget.
- **L.I.E. DISTRICT, FAMILY CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13th, 3 - 5 PM** at Hicksville UMC. Fun & games, food, and a special Christmas message for ages 3-11! Please see the flyer.
- **GIVING TREE:** Our Giving Tree once again bears ornaments with items requested by local organizations that serve the needy. Gift cards to general retailers (Target, Walmart, etc.) are also appreciated as they can be used for specific needs or emergencies. **Please put all gifts unwrapped under our tree by December 14th.** Should you prefer that we shop for you, checks can be made payable to FUMW and given to Karen Gierie Newman. Please find the flyer at the south transept.

SUPPORTING OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

The Long Island Coalition for the Homeless is seeking our support. Despite their name, the organization provides essential assistance—including food, toiletries, and cleaning supplies—to **anyone in need across Long Island**, not only individuals experiencing homelessness.

Their current greatest need is for shelf-stable protein items, including: Canned tuna and chicken, Pasta, Rice and beans, and Peanut butter. For your convenience, donations may be made directly through their **[Amazon Wishlist - https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/2CXXJFQN0RC4V?ref=cm_sw_r_apin_ggr-subnav-share_3APETJNEMQAF0ANM1&language=en-US]**, or you are welcome to bring items to the church.

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Bing. Thank you for helping to share God's love through your generosity and compassion.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SEASON:

(Flyers are available at the south transept bulletin board for detailed information)

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14th at 9:30 AM

Our Annual Christmas Pageant is one of the most popular events of the year as we watch and learn from our children and adults. Please don't miss out!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24th:

- 7:00 PM – Family Service
- 10:30 PM - Candlelight Service (In person only)
- INVITE & BRING OTHERS TO WORSHIP CHRIST!

ADVENT STUDY - “ADVENT: THE BIRTH OF JESUS”:
SUNDAYS, NOV. 30, DEC. 7, DEC. 21, 11 AM in FELLOWSHIP HALL

A journey through Advent with a focused, three-week study on the coming of Jesus, centered on the opening chapters of Matthew, Luke, and John. Together we'll explore Matthew's genealogy and nativity, Luke's annunciation and manger scenes, and John's profound reframing of the Christmas story as both cosmic and intimate. Each session weaves together Scripture reading, historical insight, and prayerful questions that invite both personal reflection and shared conversation.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION MINISTRIES

- Friday Ladies Small Group Meets at 7:30 pm Via Zoom
- Saturday Men's Bible Study Meets at 8:00 am-9:00 am Via Zoom
- Wednesday Bible Study Meets at 10:30 am Via Zoom

CONCERNS & COMMITMENTS:

Whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, the Spirit of God is at work. If you have been touched by God and desire to make a commitment to Christ and to His Church or you would like to have the pastor pray with/for you, please come to the Altar after worship, the pastor will meet with you for prayer.

PRAYER CONCERNS AND JOYS

We share prayer requests as part of our regular service. Please raise your hand for the microphone to share your prayer concerns and joys with the congregation. If you have private prayer requests, please write your prayer request upon your arrival at the sanctuary and then pass it to the offering basket during the offertory time. Thank you!

FARMINGDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Church Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
For a link to view the service via on-line please visit www.farmingdaleumc.org